

The Old and New Year.

SELECTED BY BELLE WILT.

Old year, farewell! It grieves my heart,
To feel we now so soon must part:
Amid the changing scenes of earth,
Where sorrow wept or cheerful mirth
Enjoyed the hour, I've walked with thee,
And shared thy blessed sympathy.
At home, abroad, with friends new found,
Or those to whom I've long been bound,
I've traveled side by side with thee;
And now to part, is grief to me.

Farewell! Thou goest, to yield thy place
To one who comes with smiling face,
And many promises to be
A better friend than thou to me,
To bear me onward to the goal
With lighter steps, and happier soul.
Well doth he promise; but to win
A crown of life and free from sin,
The resting place of saints secure,
Ah, who but Christ can make that sure?

Then to His cross, incoming Year,
Let every moment bear me near,
And nearer still; thus will thou be
The friend thou promisest to me?
Farewell, Old Year: we ne'er shall meet
In market thronged, or crowded street;
But we shall meet before the throne,
Where all the deeds mankind have done,
Proclaimed and judged, shall find award
From Christ the omniscient Lord.

New Year, thy proffered hand I take,
With thee thy pilgrimage to make;
Or, e'er thy hasty mouth have fled,
Perchance to slumber with the dead.
Whatever my future lot may be—
Which thou canst not reveal to me—
To Him who rules o'er earth and sky,
Cheerful I yield my destiny.
May He my footsteps here attend,
And crown me at my journey's end.

"And I saw the heavens opened."—Acts 7:56.

BY GEORGE W. NEFF.

The Gospel of Jesus Christ has opened heaven to our souls. Believing the great truths which come to us through the opened heavens, we are enabled to look into the future, and looking, to rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory. Our souls are ever craving peace and joy, for these are the blessings which sustain us, while on our pilgrimage through this world; but this peace and joy can only be had by looking through the Gospel into the heaven it has opened unto us. Those who make the journey of life with their eyes cast down upon imaginary dangers, will make life dark instead of bright and joyful; but if, as we journey through life, we keep an upward look—looking into the heavens through the Gospel, then, under all the troubles and trials of life we shall have peace and joy. Looking into the open heavens, we are enabled to see the glorious Son of Righteousness, and the beautiful stars of promise, hear the songs of angels and the harps of the redeemed. Close the Gospel and this world would indeed be dark; but with the heavens open, and looking through them, we make life bright. What we behold there makes amends for all we suffer here.

The Gospel opens to our vision of faith the beauty and glory of heaven. First, to the mind, the truths of heaven; then, to the soul, the peace and joy of heaven; and to the vision, the beauty of heaven, for the Gospel opens heaven to our vision of faith, as a place, and also as a state or condition of the soul, and in both respects it is all that can be desired. It is true, the opening is only partial. "We see through a glass darkly;" nevertheless, we see; and when we have seen all that the eye of faith can take in, we are then authorized to let the imagination fill up the picture. And when imagination has done its best, and gone as far as thought can reach, the gospel opening gives assurance that beyond all this, there still "remains a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

Looking into the Gospel heaven we see no limit to the good which God has in reserve for his children. And we are authorized to look upon the beautiful things of this world, as types and shadows of better and more beautiful things to come. Everything beautiful this side the river, I am inclined to think, is typical of something more beautiful lying beyond. Revelation justifies this. Our wide, beautiful valleys, landscapes, fountains of waters, are only shadows of the more beautiful, where shines one eternal day, surpassing in beauty all that nature has ever presented, or pencil ever painted. Fountains of water that run forever, streams that make glad the City of God; a pure

and peaceful wave that issues from, and rolls round and round the throne of God. The fragrance of Spring, and growth of Summer; the rich harvest and the white-robed Winter are but the types and shadows of the better beyond. The golden beams of our noon-tide sun; the rays of night's gentle Queen, and the starry firmament of evening, with all their beauty and glory, are only shadows of things to come; shadows of the beauty and glory of that world that needs no sun, moon nor stars; that world in which there is a glory above that of the sun's golden beams, a brightness superior to the moon's, that is ever visible through all the brightness and glory of that "one eternal day." In this world it takes darkness of night to bring to view the beauty of the heavens; but in that world of which this is but typical, "beauty never fades."

It may be said that this is but imagination let loose, to draw beautiful pictures of what would be desirable in the future world. Well, suppose it is imaginary, it still falls short of the reality. It is all in the direction of goodness, purity and love, and in this direction the imagination of the finite cannot reach beyond the power of the infinite. Our fruitful imagination is the gift of God; and it was given to be exercised and that we might look at the beautiful things of this world, and from them rise to and picture out more beautiful things in the world to come. And the opened heavens justifies the imagination in drawing such pictures, for, looking through them, we see God whose nature is love, and who is able in the direction of goodness to do exceeding abundantly above all that we can ask or think; and, consequently can and will work out for his children realities beyond all that the imagination can possibly picture.

Looking through the heavens opened by the Gospel, we realize the joy of faith; a joy unspeakable and full of glory; we gather the assurance that we are not alone in the world; that we are not the mere creatures of a day; the offspring of chance; the sport of a few fleeting hours; but that God is our Father. And now as the heavens have been opened, we can look up and looking up we can learn what we are, and what we should do, and how to do it.—Archie, Missouri.

Buried Talent in the Church.

Much has been well written and spoken on this practical subject, but more is needed, and line upon line, until the church comes to see and feel how much she suffers—how her work is delayed and the salvation for which she stands is put back for the want and waste of unused energy. Not more than 15 per cent. of the energy—it has been computed—entrusted to the church to be expended in plans and labors to save men and build up the kingdom of Christ is utilized and expended for this purpose. The remaining 85 per cent. is either buried and not put to use or used to set up the kingdom of darkness and sin.

The Word of God is by no means silent on this subject. The Revised Version throws new light upon it, and shows that Christ's ascension gifts—the gift of apostles and prophets, evangelists, pastors and teachers—were for the express purpose of utilizing the whole energy and making every member of the body of Christ an active and effective worker.

"And he gave some to be apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; for the perfecting of the saints, unto the work of ministering, unto the building up of the body of Christ; till we all attain unto the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a full-grown man, unto the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ." (Ephesians 4:11-13.)

This Scripture is also suggestive of the way in which the hidden energy of the church is to be called out. It puts forward the pastors and teachers of the church. Upon them lies the responsibility of calling out the energy that lies hidden, and directing the gifts of those to whom they minister.—SE.

Concentration is the secret of strength in politics, in war, in trade, in short, in all management of human affairs.

The greatest thing that we can desire next to the glory of God, is our own salvation, and the sweetest thing we can desire is the assurance of our salvation.

Government.

BY A. L. DAVIS.

Proper government is an indispensable factor to secure success to any institution, whether church, school or state. To attempt to succeed without proper ruling is but to realize when too late, a complete failure. We may look back over the entire catalogue of successes and failures. The result of the former has its source and entire course in a proper superintendence,—all that what we may. The latter was due to improper management—bad government. It was not until the intelligence, wealth, suffering and large-heartedness of the American people were crystallized in the constitution of the United States that our freedom was secured. Dark days are not an evidence of failures, as many suppose; but if, in the midst of the battle, discouraged on every hand ridiculed by Ignorance, bound in chains by Disorder, the head be clear and the heart large, a consciousness that, "thus saith the Lord," will prove sufficient to conquer every foe and secure a freedom more enduring than the mind of man can devise.

Every christian church has for its object one grand accomplishment—the salvation of the world from sin. To bring about the desired result, different methods have been proposed and have been in no small degree successful. Methods are now being brought forward for the consideration of every person. Education is to-day more vividly than ever unveiling the results of ignorance and presenting the beauties and enjoyments of religion.

In the midst of the supposed apparent conflicts in church government we are called upon now—at this moment, to be at least intelligent enough to "give a reason for the hope that is within us." It is not enough that we say we believe thus and so, and cannot believe otherwise. It is not in harmony with the Christian work to say, you shall do this or that, because I think so; but it is enough to step to the front, to put on the whole armor of God, and wield an influence reflecting a change, if needs be in the present condition of the church. The belief that the church is losing influence, that she has no order or government, exists only in the mind of the one saying, "Lo, here is Christ." Satan and his host are ascertaining that the world is right side down, and that union and peace reign supreme under a Christian administration.

I said different methods have been proposed to obtain a common result—Christianizing the world. The hope and assurance that these methods would prove successful have resulted in the organization of the different churches now existing. Separated perhaps on a few minor points but firmly united in the cause of battling for the Lord. To each soldier enlisted in the Christian warfare, Paul says, to-day, "Stand." "Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed," etc.

Having the Lord for our Commander whom shall we fear? With the word of God for her counsel, the church is marching on to victory.

Lebanon, O., Dec. 14, 1884.

Preaching to Three People.

It is not easy to tell by outward circumstances what will be the ultimate results of labor in the cause of Christ. The efforts which we may esteem least may be most signally blessed, and when circumstances may seem most forbidding, blessings may most abound.

A Christian friend informed us that a number of years ago an earnest preacher, named John Holmes, had an appointment to preach one evening at Castle Bar in Ireland. On arriving at the place he found a congregation of three, to whom, not daunted nor discouraged, he preached the word of everlasting life, doing his work for God in faith and zeal. One of the persons present was converted; a young man, who grew in grace, and was subsequently called to the ministry of God, and greatly used of the Lord in his service. It was a good hour's work when John Holmes preached the gospel of Christ to a congregation of three at Castle Bar. One soul saved is worth a life of labor, and especially when that soul, thus won, becomes a soul-winner, and gathers others to the ark of God, as has that Castle Bar convert, since known throughout the world as William Arthur, author of "The Tongue of Fire."—THE CHRISTIAN.